

## LOCAL NEWS

# Book sale nets record \$66,000



Leeta Harris browses the books for sale Friday at the Friends of the Abilene Public Library annual book sale. Nellie Doneva/Reporter-News

*By Loretta Fulton, Special to the Reporter-News*

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The emcee for an appreciation luncheon Wednesday dispensed with formalities and immediately got to the point.

"We had a record year," said Matt Preston, president of the board of the Friends of the Abilene Public Library and chairman of the group's annual book sale, which concluded Sunday.

The final amount from the three-day sale totaled \$66,051, surpassing the previous record of \$59,273 reached in 2014. Last year's sale netted \$56,279.

"That's a lot of \$1 and \$2 books," Preston said.

Wednesday's luncheon at the main library downtown was a "thank you" to the volunteers and sponsors of the sale, who made it possible for the Friends to raise that much money. Proceeds go toward new books, equipment, activities and staff training at the library. Some of the proceeds also will go toward the South Branch library, which is being built in the Mall of Abilene.

One reason for the sale's success was the volume of books, CDs, DVDs, collectibles and other items donated. More than 100,000 items were donated this year, another record.

A longtime stalwart of the book sale, Margaret Basquette, was honored during the luncheon with a bouquet of flowers and a gift. This marked the last year for Basquette, 81, to play the role of "chief sorter" of the donated items. In years past, Basquette has worked year-round sorting and boxing donations as they come in.

Preston said he learned that Friends members are an opinionated bunch when he started talking about how to honor Basquette.

"Don't get Margaret another plaque," was the mandate.

In addition to the flowers and gift, Basquette also got a standing ovation from the crowd that filled the second-floor auditorium at the library.

This also marked Preston's third and final year to chair the book sale, although he will remain on the Friends board. Tim Bench, a Friends board member, will chair the event next year.

In addition to the financial report, Preston shared a few anecdotes from Sunday's "Bag-O-Books" day. Each year on the final day of the sale, books are sold for \$6 per grocery bag, rather than being priced by types. Preston said the Bag-O-Books day always brings out interesting people.

One man wore a T-shirt with a slogan that could easily be the slogan for the book sale, which is dependent on so many people volunteering and so many things that have to fall into place on time.

"I don't believe in miracles," the slogan proclaimed. "I depend on them."

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